DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 404 244 SO 026 536

AUTHOR	Fier, Harriet, Ed.; And Others
TITLE	Rights and Responsibilities. User Guide for Grades K-6. My America: Building a Democracy Series.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	9p.; "My America" is a 12-unit multimedia series with each unit consisting of a 15-20 minute videotape, resource directory diskette, and brief 8-page user guide. Only the printed user guides are included here; see SO 026 804-810 and SO 026 536-540.
AVAILABLE FROM	New Castle Communications, 229 King Street, Chappaqua, NY 10514 (available in English and Spanish).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Citizen Participation; Citizen Role; Citizenship; *Citizenship Education; *Citizenship Responsibility; Civics; Critical Thinking; *Democracy; Democratic Values; Elementary Education; Law Related Education; *Social Studies

ABSTRACT

This user guide covers "Rights and Responsibilities," and offers suggestions for preparatory activities, lessons, and follow-up activities for primary, intermediate, and upper grade students. Goals for the series are to help children: (1) become familiar with the democratic process and active citizenship; (2) recognize what it means to be a citizen in a multi-cultural society; (3) build skills in communications and cooperation; (4) recognize how laws are made and how a single vote and voice matter; and (5) experience how caring and commitment build community. The objective of "Rights and Responsibilities" is to encourage appreciation of the freedoms all share in a democracy. Contains a 13-item bibliography for students and a 2-item bibliography for teachers are listed. (LAP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 404 244

For Grades K-6

My America
Building a Democracy

CC

Available in English and Spanish

Rights and Responsibilities

User Guide

SO 026 536

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Shannon Murphy
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
■ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
□ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My America: Building a Democracy

GOALS

To help children:

- become familiar with the democratic process and active citizenship,
- recognize what it means to be a citizen in a multicultural society,
- build skills in communications and cooperation,
- recognize how laws are made and how a single vote and voice matter, and
- experience how caring and commitment build community.

FORMAT

MY AMERICA is a 12-unit series, consisting of:

- 15-20 minute videos
- User Guides
- Resource Directory Disks (MS-DOS & MAC)

Materials were designed by educators, for educators. An interdisciplinary approach to hands-on learning is used.

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

The MY AMERICA kits motivate children to participate actively in their schools and local communities, and to experience the democratic process. The series attempts to demystify the government, explain how laws are made, and show how American democracy is always evolving. MY AMERICA combines elements of traditional civics and social studies curricula with techniques and activities that encourage children to participate and become involved. **Its underlying theme is: Democracy works best when everyone participates.**

MY AMERICA teaches in the voices of children in a way that respects their intelligence and natural curiosity.

THE VIDEOS

Each tape contains on-location documentaries, animation and historical illustration. A classroom modeling lesson encourages children to use their skills in reading, writing, listening, painting, singing and performing. The cooperative learning model is central to each video.

Videos are developed within the following framework:

Kid View: Children give thought-provoking, lively opinions on each topic.

Documentary: Historical context and current concerns are blended with examples of children making a difference in their communities. This section is rich in historical information and opens up a wide range of discovery possibilities.

Modeling Lesson: Educators and students develop an interdisciplinary activity designed to bring alive the educational objective of the video.

Wrap Up: The key concept is recapped from the diverse perspectives of both children and adults.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

—Margaret Mead

PAUSE POINTS

The videotapes can be used in a variety of ways. Some educators use the tapes to teach three separate lessons on a concept. To facilitate this usage, a blackboard icon comes up between the Kid View, the Documentary and the Modeling Lesson, giving educators appropriate PAUSE POINTS during which to elaborate on concepts.

THE USER GUIDES

Guides provide multiple learning experiences, lesson plans and bibliographies built around social studies and citizenship themes. Suggested activities are interdisciplinary in approach and focus on skills in communication and cooperation.

RESOURCE DIRECTORY DISKS (MS-DOS & MAC)

MY AMERICA Resource Directory Disks include black-lined master activity sheets, samples of letters to parents and organizations, petitions, proclamations and press releases—all of which can be customized. Also included are a listing of additional resources, bibliographic references for students and teachers, historical documents, and curriculum correlations.

This icon 💾 indicates that additional material is available on the MY AMERICA Resource Directory Disk.

© 1994 New Castle Communications, Inc.

Rights and Responsibilities

My America
Building a Democracy

Educational objective:

To appreciate the freedoms we all share in a democracy.

Student concept:

I treasure my freedom.

Video preview

Children define freedom and explain the range of rights they have living in the American democracy. A class proceeds through a typical morning session with half the children experiencing how it feels to live without voice, without rights, and without freedom. We observe, experience and hear their frustrations as their accepted freedoms are taken away. Our individual rights and the framework of our government are outlined as ideals in the Bill of Rights, the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution. Featured throughout are vignettes that focus on the importance of these documents which define our democracy. We see how a group of children creates and maintains a wetlands outside their school.

"America is a place of freedom, at least for some people."

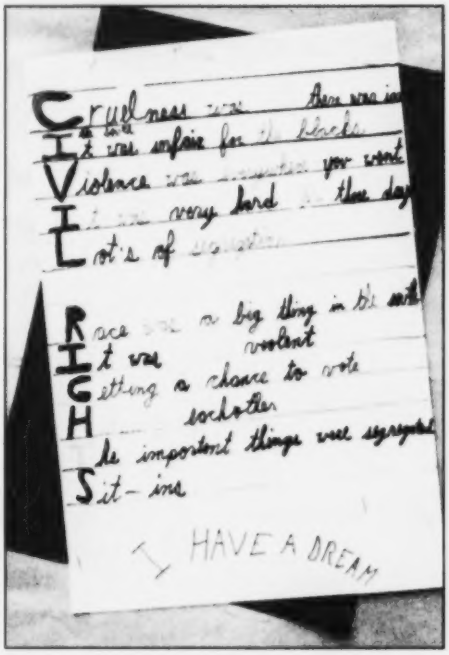
—Fourth Grader
Minnesota

Suggestions for using "Rights and Responsibilities"

As an Opening and/or Culminating Experience to a Unit of Study: The video and suggested activities are designed to supplement your existing social studies curriculum. They are highly motivating resources to introduce the concept that with each freedom we treasure comes a responsibility to uphold.

As an Individual Lesson: Suggested activities provide experiences to help children understand the value of honoring our rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Activities are divided into those appropriate for primary, intermediate and upper elementary school children.

As an Assembly Program: On 3 X 5 cards, children write their names and a sentence that starts with the words "I treasure my freedom of... by...." The children place the card in a container as they come into the auditorium. The teacher/facilitator randomly picks 10 cards and invites the children who wrote them to read their statements to the group. Introduce the *Rights and Responsibilities* video.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My America
Building a Democracy

Rights and Responsibilities

"This learning experience makes a 200 year old document come powerfully alive for the children. Suddenly, its meaning and power take on new significance and the children begin to realize the importance of individual freedoms."

—Sallyanne Waldinger
Modeling Teacher
Mt. Kisco Elementary School
Mt. Kisco, NY

Getting ready to view the video

• In the great documents that gave birth to our nation and defined our democracy, our leaders declared that human beings have the right to freedom from abusive laws and oppressive actions. The powerful words of these documents created the framework for a new kind of government that would nourish "the greatest good for the greatest number."

The American democracy evolves through the vision and actions of its citizens. We are still working toward living up to the honorable ideals of equal rights for all women, men and children.

• To emphasize how often we take our freedoms for granted, conduct an abbreviated version of the Video Modeling Lesson described below. This can be accomplished by dividing the children into two groups for a short period of time (one half-hour). One group has freedom while the other group has none. Switch groups after the first half hour. Just one half-hour without freedom will open their minds to feel the Kid Concept "I treasure my freedom."

The concept of "I treasure..." is a meaningful one. Create a word web with the children on the phrase to help them understand the deep feelings it conveys. Ask them who or what they treasure in their lives.

Key vocabulary: freedom, rights, constitution, discrimination, amendment, responsibility, citizen, democracy, community, participate, volunteer

Key phrases "take for granted," "the law of the land," "all men are created equal," "inalienable rights," 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"

Video Modeling Lesson: Losing Freedom

★Discuss rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. Write the words on the board and ask the children for their definitions.

★Print and distribute copies of the Bill of Rights. See the MY AMERICA for the full text. Study what these rights mean and the history of how they were written over 200 years ago.

★Refer to books in the *Rights and Responsibilities* Bibliography for help interpreting the meaning of each right in language the children can understand.

★Ask the children to research and discuss the times in our country's history when these rights were denied individuals and groups of people like Native Americans, African-Americans, people with disabilities, women and various immigrant groups.

★Celebrate the lives of individuals throughout history who have fought to help restore the rights of those who have been discriminated against.

★To help the children feel empathy for those who have lost their rights, divide the class into two groups. During the morning session, one group experiences life without voice, rights and freedom; the other half retains these rights and freedoms.

★After lunch, the group without rights speaks of how it felt to be denied basic rights. Take time to hear from the group who had rights.

★Encourage the children to write, draw and speak about losing rights.

★During the next morning, switch groups and repeat the exercise to give everyone a chance to experience losing or having rights.

★Think of who in today's society needs help in their struggle for freedom. Vote on an active citizenship project to help end the discrimination.

Modeling Lesson Materials: paper, pens, pencils, drawing materials

Rights and Responsibilities

My America
Building a Democracy

Follow-up activities for primary grade children

★Read one of the books in the *Rights and Responsibilities* Bibliography that focuses on who wrote the Declaration of Independence in language young children can understand. Ask them to role-play a scene that illustrates how the colonists might have felt to be asked to let British soldiers stay in their homes anytime they wished. Discuss the unfair laws that motivated colonists to separate from Great Britain.

★Do the children believe that any rules or laws in the class or in the school are unfair and need to be changed? List their responses on the board or a chart. Give them time to express their opinions and release any frustrations about the rules. Discuss the democratic way to initiate change. Begin discussion, debate, research, documentation and presentation of a new rule or idea to replace the one that's not working.

★America is founded on the idea that everyone is equal and free. Everyday we try to live up to this great ideal. Do the children treat each other fairly? What would the world look like if everyone was truly free and equal? What would the world feel like if everyone had a life full of opportunity? Children illustrate the answers to these questions in a collage—with their imaginations, colored paper, yarn, markers, cotton, and dried flowers.

Follow-up activities for intermediate grade children

★In the American democracy, the government is divided into three branches. Congress makes the law. The President signs the law and makes it official. The Supreme Court reviews and interprets cases around the law. The people who wrote the Constitution designed this separation of powers. It keeps one branch from getting too powerful and oppressive. See the MY AMERICA for an activity sheet. Discuss how power is shared in the city or town in which the children live. Is democracy working in their town? How is power shared in the school community? Is democracy working in school? How is power shared in the classroom? Is democracy working in class?

★The early history of America focuses on the men who wrote the documents that formed and shaped our democracy. Many of these men had women as life partners who sparked their thinking and who also worked hard to bring the new country to life. Who are these foremothers? What were their contributions to the vision that created America? Children break into working groups to research these women, their stories and their legacies. Document the findings in ways that can be shared with large numbers of people for years to come.

"Once the children begin to really investigate the Bill of Rights, it becomes personal. They realize that their opinions really do matter and are motivated to action."

—Bill Hunter
Modeling Teacher
Mt. Kisco Elementary School
Mt. Kisco, NY

Find It In The MY AMERICA

- **The Bill of Rights**
- **The Declaration of Independence**
- **Iroquois Great Law of Peace**

Rights and Responsibilities

"...Beneath the skin, beyond the differing features and into the true heart of being, fundamentally we are more alike, my friends, than we are unalike."

—Maya Angelou

Follow-up activities for upper grade children

★Ask the children who are the individuals and groups of people struggling for equality and full freedom in America today. Document their responses on a bulletin board How long is the list? Have they included senior citizens; people who don't speak English; people who have difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, thinking; people with terminal illnesses; people who love someone of their own sex; people without homes; short people, very, very tall people; poor people, women and children?

★Engage children in a discussion about why some people are not experiencing the full rights and freedoms that the documents of our democracy protect. How does discrimination appear in the lives of these people? What forms does it take? Document the children's responses on the bulletin board.

★Children brainstorm a definition of discrimination. Create a word web with their ideas. Ask: Have they ever been discriminated against? How did it feel? Have they ever discriminated against someone? If so, how can they begin to remove the feelings of discrimination from their hearts and minds?

★Children write their discrimination definitions on construction paper and place them on the bulletin board in a way that visually dramatizes the rest of the information. Take time to reflect on why we still have discrimination in our democracy. What can they do to help eliminate this discrimination wall?

★This exercise creates the possibility of a full year's work on understanding the devastating effect of discrimination on people throughout the history of America and the world. It provides an opportunity for children to discuss, debate and vote on helping someone or some group, either locally or nationally, that needs support in their struggle for equal rights. Action plans can be devised with timelines and resource needs. (See the Video Modeling Lesson in the *What Is a Democracy?* kit.)

★Most importantly, this exercise can be used to emphasize how we are still building the American democracy. Through the collaborative efforts of active citizens, America evolves and grows into a country that cherishes all its people, all the time. As Margaret Mead wrote:

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

The MY AMERICA Newsletter publishes active citizenship projects and activities. Send your photos, stories, and videotapes to:

MY AMERICA Newsletter
c/o New Castle Communications
229 King Street
Chappaqua, NY 10514

My America
Building a Democracy

Bibliography

FOR CHILDREN

Berry, J. *Every Kid's Guide to Understanding Human Rights.* Chicago: Childrens Press, 1987. A combination of silly and solemn ways to teach young readers how to solve many problems. Grades 3-5.

Giff, P. Reilly. *Mother Teresa.* New York: Puffin Books, 1986. The story of the remarkable woman who has devoted her life to people in need all over the world. Grades 2-6.

Greene, C. *The United Nations.* Chicago: Childrens Press, 1983. A concise, clear description of the United Nations. Grades 3-6.

Johnson, L. Carlson. *Our Constitution.* Brookfield, Connecticut: Millbrook Press, 1992. A clear description of the events which led to the formulation of the document on which our democracy is based. Grades 3-6.

Lepthien, EW. *Wetlands.* Chicago, Childrens Press, 1993. Color photographs illustrate the teeming flora and fauna that populate the ecologically important wetland. Grades 3-5.

Levy, E. *If You Were There When They Signed the Constitution.* New York: Scholastic Inc, Each page answers a question like "How are laws passed? or "What is an amendment? Well written, with color photos. Grades 4-6.

Lewis, B. *The Kids Guide To Social Action: How To Solve The Social Problems You Choose—And Turn Creative Thinking into Positive Action.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc, 1991. Clear, concise manual that outlines all the steps toward positive social change. Grades 5-6.

Maestro, B. Maestro, G. *A More Perfect Union:* The Story of Our Constitution. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 1987. An inside look at the personalities who drafted the Constitution. Grades 4-6.

Meltzer, M. *The Bill Of Rights.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1990. A straightforward discussion of the history of the Bill Of Rights. Grades 5-6.

Plummer, SG. *The Constitution Made Easier.* Rochelle Park, New Jersey: The Peoples' Publishing Group Inc, 1987. A simplified version of the original document, designed especially for younger readers. Grades 3-6.

Richards, N. *The Story of the Declaration of Independence.* Chicago: Childrens Press, 1992. Vividly tells why the colonies broke away from the British and declared their belief in democracy. Grades 3-6.

Sgroi, P. *This Constitution.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1986. Young readers will enjoy this vivid description of how the Constitution was written. Grades 2-5.

Spier, P. *We the People.* New York: Doubleday and Co, 1987. Illustrated celebration of the entire Constitution. Grades 2-4.

FOR TEACHERS

Akwesasne Notes Mohawk Nation. *Basic Call to Consciousness.* Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Company, 1978.

Fisher, D. Canfield. *Our Independence and the Constitution.* New York: Random House, 1990. The writing of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution seen through the eyes of a Philadelphia family.

MY AMERICA BOARD OF ADVISORS

Robert Berger
Fifth Grade Teacher
Los Angeles, CA

Arleen Chatman
Librarian
Los Angeles, CA

Frances Contreras
First Grade Teacher
New York, NY

Paul Hanson
Executive Director, Social Sciences
Dade County School System
Miami, FL

Sel Shimmerlik
Resource Teacher, K-5
Chappaqua, NY

Cordell Svengalis, PhD
Social Science Consultant
Des Moines, IA

COMMITTEE OF CIVIC EDUCATORS

R. Freeman Butts
Emeritus Professor
The Foundation of Education
Teachers College
Columbia University

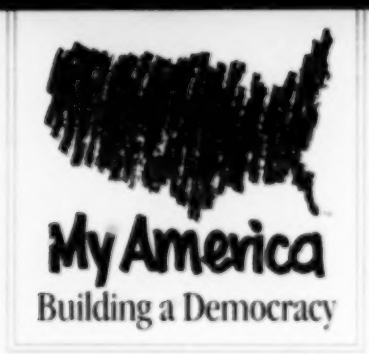
Lorraine Canoe
Department of Black & Puerto Rican Studies
Hunter College

Rhonda Haines
State Bar of Texas
Public Service Law-Related Education

Scott Stripling
The National Center for American Founding Documents

Check the MY AMERICA for additional books, resources, and activity sheets to extend the concepts of *Rights and Responsibilities.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



CC

MY AMERICA:
LEARNING ABOUT
DEMOCRACY

USER GUIDES and DIRECTORY DISK

Editor
Harriet Fier

Writer/Editor
Anne Marie Santoro

Researchers
Toby Appleton
Jenny Gillespie

Art Direction
David Kaestle, Inc.

Production
MSI New York

Photography
Robin Bowman
Marianne Barcellona
Steve Northrup

MY AMERICA consists of the following program titles:

What Is a Flag?
A Pledge Is a Promise
Neighborhood and Community
Liberty and Justice
What Is an American?
The Story of the National Anthem
What Is a Democracy?
How Our Laws Are Made
Becoming an Active Citizen
Rights and Responsibilities

Teaching in a Multicultural Society (For Teachers)
Parents, Teachers and Community: Working Together (For Parents)

Resources available, AT NO CHARGE, when you purchase the entire multimedia series:
MY AMERICA Newsletter: published three times during the school year.
MY AMERICA Teacher Training Video: 10 classroom activities around civic issues.

ORDER 1-800-723-1283 TOLL-FREE

"In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

—The Great Law of the Six Nations
Iroquois Confederacy

About New Castle Communications, Inc.
MY AMERICA is published by New Castle Communications, Inc. The company is creating educational materials in video, print and computer software formats. New Castle Communications is committed to designing, producing and distributing multimedia materials that engage children and inspire them to get involved in their classrooms, schools and communities.

NEW CASTLE COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
229 King Street, Chappaqua, NY 10514 914-238-0600 Fax 914-238-8445